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SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE

"Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores."

VOL. I. — No. 1. BOSTON, DECEMBER 6, 1875. PRICE, 15 CENTS.

Sheets for the Cradle.

EDITOR - - MISS SUSAN HALE.

The series will consist of six numbers. Terms of subscription, *One Dollar* in advance, for which the papers will be sent by mail, post paid.

RING the bell. Where is the prompter? Are you ready?

Oh! not quite yet; just a little bit more rouge here on the left. Where is my book?

You can't take the book on with you.

But that place, about "with undying gratitude she accepts the conditions"—

You have just said it perfectly. Come, now,—

Bell!

Wait a minute. The piano is behind the fireplace. All right. *Kling!*

Just one minute! *Kling!* [*Curtain rises.*

THE FAIR HAS BEGUN.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—In thus making her bow before you the editor of SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE is overwhelmed with her responsibilities. *Kling!* (Drop the curtain! Nothing was to have been said about responsibilities. Very well, no matter. Begin again.) *Kling!* [*Curtain rises.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—In thus making her bow before you, the editor of SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE acknowledges the honor awarded to her. With undying gratitude she accepts the position to which she has been assigned here. It shall be her pleasure to endeavor this week to enhance the attractions of the Fair by such serious discourse as shall temper your levity; by such cheerful communication as shall relieve your weariness; by careful description she will guide your steps to the most attractive points; by light jests she will smoothe away the furrows of your brows when you are trying to reconcile the sums you have just spent with the sums you had previously resolved to devote to the Fair.

Not alone and unaided would she have ventured upon such a task; but the cordial assistance of "distinguished talent" in each of these departments, and the consciousness of a good cause, give her courage. But one thing is needed — your approbation. Lay aside the spectacles of criticism. Its cold blue glass may be healthful to the optic nerve, but it is most trying to the nerves of the inspected object. Be indulgent for once, dear reader, even if you were born in Boston; praise, enjoy, approve, and buy everything you see at the Fair; and above all read your newspaper through, *pince-nez couleur de rose.* (She speaks with the express permission of Dr. Derby; for this one occasion only.)

There, that will do for the present. After all, we are to meet every day. Turn the sheet and read Mr. Trollope, and —. (She is saying too much.) *Kling!* [*Curtain.*

WHAT SHALL WE WRAP THE BABY IN?

BY LUCY LARCOM.

WHAT shall we wrap the baby in?
Silks are too coarse and velvets too rough,
Snowiest linens not half white enough,
Web of right fineness no fairy can spin:
What shall we wrap the baby in?

Softest of colors may cover his bed, —
Delicate hues of the sky and the rose,
Tints of all buds that in May-morns unclose,
When on the bosom of Sleep drops his head:
He must have something more heavenly, instead.

What shall we wrap the baby in?
Nothing that fingers have woven will do:
Looms of the heart weave love ever anew.
Love, only love, is the right thread to spin,
Love we must wrap the baby in.

CONUNDRUM.—Why was the purchasing of decorations for this hall rather soothing than otherwise?

Because it was chiefly to buy Baby Bunting.

A TEWKSBURY ALMSHOUSE DREAM.

I DREAMPT that I died last night. I went straight into the next world, and as soon as I got there I went right up to the best-looking place I seed. There was a pleasant-looking man a-settin' afore the gate, and I axed him if I might come in. He wanted to know my name and I told him 't was Ann Capen, of Tewksbury, Mass. He began to look into his books. There wan't many of 'em, and when he got through, says he, "I 'm sorry to say your name ain't down here, and you can't come in." Says I, "What shall I do?" Says he, "Have you tried the other place?" and I told him I had n't. Says he, "I guess you 'd better." I axed him where it was. Says he (pinting) "It 's straight right down there. You once begin to go down and you won't make no sort of mistake." Then I begun to go down, and the furder and furder I went the hotter and hotter it growd and the wus and wus it smelt of brimstone, and when I got clean down to the bottom, it was the space of as much as five minutes afore I could git my breath to speak to the horrid critter there was there afore the gate. Finally I thought it could n't be much wus inside than 't was out, and I axed him if I might come in. He growled out and wanted to know my name, and I told him. Then that critter begun to look into his books, and I thought he never would git through he had sech an awful lot on 'em. Finally he got clean to the end of the last book and slammed it tew. Says he, "Your name ain't down here, and you can 't come in." Says I, "What shall I do?" Says he, "Hev you tried the other place?" and I told him I had. "Wall," says he, "there 's a mistake somewhere, but 't aint in my office. Your name ain't down here and you can 't come in." "Then," says I, "what, in the circumstances, would you advise a poor woman to dew?" Says he, "You 'd better go back to Tewksbury, Mass." And then *I cried.*

414

NEVER, NEVER,—NEVER, NEVER.

A CONDENSED NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES, AFTER THE MANNER OF BRET HARTE.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

MARY TOMKINS.

JOHN THOMAS was a clerk in the post-office, beloved by all who knew him ; but he never did any work, usually had a novel and a bottle of brandy in his desk, and broke the heart of the Junior Assistant Secretary in whose department he had been placed. He lived at 19 Finsbury Square, where he paid thirty shillings a week for his board and lodging, washing included, and fell in love with Mary Tomkins, the niece of Mrs. Johnson, the lodging-house keeper.

If ever there was an angel upon earth it was Mary Tomkins. She had long eyes and a short nose, a little mouth and a big chin, silken hair and a satin complexion, a high forehead and a small waist; but her manner was more than her appearance, and she was everything her aunt could wish her. "Never, Johnny," she said to her lover, as he sat with his arm round her waist, "never, never, never, never."

"Why the deuce won't you, then?" said John Thomas.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST KISS.

WHY would n't she ? It was now two years since she had consented to be kissed, or, as may perhaps have been the case, had been kissed without her consent by the Rev. Abraham Dribble. Mr. Dribble had been a Low-Church scoundrel. He had kissed and had left the parish, having sneaked himself into the good graces of a bishop. Mary soon knew the nature of the man, but the kiss was still there and was hallowed. "Never, never, never, never !" It was her daily language as Johnny Thomas sat with his arm around her waist when his office hours were over.

"Surely you love him," said her aunt, in confidence, while they were preparing together a Saturday pie for the lodgers.

"Shall there be two loves ?" asked Mary.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Johnson, practically, "if the first fails, or maybe three, — as circumstances may require."

"Never, never, never, never !" said Mary Tomkins.

CHAPTER III.

ANASTASIA FITZAPPLEJOHN.

On Monday, April 1, Mary Tomkins received the following letter : —

"Only that he pleads a previous promise to you, John Thomas would be my bridegroom. I have his heart, I know, And, oh ! and, oh ! and oh ! it is too true that he has mine. Be noble and make him free, and enjoy the undying friendship of

"ANASTASIA FITZAPPLEJOHN.

"P. S. Or keep him in your mercenary bonds, and then you shall know what a raging woman can do."

Mary sat as usual with her waist encircled by his arm, while with her left hand she held the crumpled letter. "John," she said, "who has your heart ?"

"Who but you, my poppet ?"

"Anastasia Fitzapplejohn has your heart."

"She be —— oh ! anything you please except married to me."

"Where were you last night, John ? Did you pass the hours you were away from here with that female ?"

"But listen to me, Mary."

"I demand to know whether you were there ?"

"Wait till I tell you all about it."

"I will hear nothing of such a one as Miss Fitzapplejohn."

"For my sake, Mary."

"Never, never, never, never !" she said, as her head dropped on his shoulder.

END OF VOLUME I.

HOW THE LEAVES CAME DOWN.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

I 'LL tell you how the leaves came down :
The great Tree to his children said,
"You 're getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red ;
It is quite time you went to bed."

"Ah !" begged each silly, pouting leaf,
"Let us a little longer stay.
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief!
'T is such a very pleasant day
We do not want to go away."

So, just for one more merry day
To the great Tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced and had their way,
Upon the Autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among,

"Perhaps the great Tree will forget
And let us stay until the Spring,
If we all beg and coax and fret."
But the great Tree did no such thing ;
He smiled to hear their whispering.

"Come, children, all to bed !" he cried ;
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them on the ground ; they lay
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till One from far away,
White bed-clothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare Tree looked down and smiled ;
"Good-night, dear little leaves," he said.
And from below, each sleepy child
Replied, "Good-night !" and murmured,
"It is so nice to go to bed !"

SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE

"Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores."

VOL. I. — No. 3. BOSTON, DECEMBER 8, 1875. PRICE, 15 CENTS.

Sheets for the Cradle.

EDITOR - - MISS SUSAN HALE.

The series will consist of six numbers. Terms of subscription, *One Dollar* in advance, for which the papers will be sent by mail, post paid.

IT WAS awkward about the cradle. IT WAS a little trying to come the first evening and find all the sheets lying round loose, and no particular place to put them in, after all our brief jottings and little remarks in the first number about being IN the cradle. But it is all right now. We are not in the cradle, but laid upon the shelf, as it were, where we are to be found in dozens and half dozens, neatly numbered, with lavender between us.

There was a vision of a cradle, which might have been built large enough to contain this editor, even in her grown-up condition, and all her staff. She will draw you a picture of it; no, cuts cost; well, the idea of it was of the old typical, conventional, superseded cradle, with a hump at the back like the top of a chaise (also out of date) and a sticking-out place in front. In this the editor dreamed to sit, surrounded by her assistants, and to sell you the Sheets therefrom. But it seems that it is not even yet time for her to return to second childhood and re-enter the receptacle for youth. The cradle fell through.

Pray now look upon the cradle as a myth, as a broad, suggestive emblem of our subject and object, our motive and end. Our sheets are woven of no common, tangible tissue; the warp is serious thinking and the woof is nonsense light. There are no long yarns woven into it; the threads are short and tastefully joined; the texture is warranted to wear and to wash, and there is no shoddy.

There is at the Fair an actual cradle, — a cradle in the flesh, *i. e.* black walnut, which, although partaking nothing of the nature of our mythical and æsthetical cradle above mentioned, is all very well in its way. Look at it. There are springs and straps and hinges, and every possible adaptation of science to soothe the slumbers of the child of the Nineteenth Century. When you want him to be lulled by rocking you have only to open a valve, which, when he should be quiet, sets the example by shutting up.

We condescend to sell shares for this cradle, which is to be raffled: 50 shares at $1.00 a share. Call and inquire at THE SHELVES.

A BRUTAL cynic, whom we will not believe, asserts that the little boy who sang "I want to be an angel" so beautifully before company, in the front parlor, was subsequently detected by the cook pilfering jelly from the cupboard.

CRADLE SONG.

CELIA THAXTER.

SLEEP, my darling, sleep!
Thunders the pitiless storm;
Fiercely at window and door
Wrestle the winds and roar:
Thy slumber is deep and warm.
Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Sleep, my baby, sleep!
Over thy beautiful head,
Lightly, softly, and close,
Sweeter than lily or rose,
Thy mother's kisses are shed.
Sleep, my baby, sleep!

Sleep, my darling, sleep!
Safe in these arms, my own,
Summer shall wrap thee round;
Never harsh touch or sound
Break through that charmèd zone.
Sleep, then, darling, sleep!

Sleep, my angel, sleep!
Nestle against my heart,
Sunk in a golden calm, —
Delicate, breathing of balm.
All my heaven thou art.
Sleep, my angel, sleep!

PRIVATE.

OH yes, oh yes! Thank you very much, Mr. Reporter of the "Daily Advertiser." So it is Miss Lucretia P. Hale that is the editor of that "sparkling daily," SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE! So it is for this that SUSAN has toiled and moiled, and gone to bed early and got up late, has written countless letters to distinguished literary persons asking them to contribute, and received answers that they are busy putting down carpets, or moving to some other place, or do not feel equal to the occasion, or else (angels!) sending just the right thing, as the reader may see for himself! So it is for this that SUSAN has suffered agonies over the Heavy editorial, and the Woman collecting advertisements on her own account, and, most dreadful of all, the total absence of "the Cradle"! Miss Lucretia P. Hale, indeed! Such is fame.

QUERIES.

MAY I ask which of the popes wrote the famous "Essay on Man."— ΠΟΙΤΗΣ.

Is it etiquette to ask a tiresome caller to leave, or would it be more proper to confine one's self to an occasional yawn, and to not replying to any remarks? — ONE OF THE "BEAU MONDE."

FOR what reason did Cicero, the Roman orator, and Sisera, the Philistine general, spell their names differently, if, as I presume, they were relations? and which is the proper spelling? — CLASSICUS.

NEVER, NEVER,—NEVER, NEVER.

A CONDENSED NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES, AFTER THE MANNER OF BRET HARTE.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

THAT SOBERED HIM.

When Mr. Dribble married the Right Honorable Catharine Mount Energy, the widow of the Earl of Pieponder, Mary Tomkins shut herself up for three weeks in her aunt's store-closet. She was visited, of course, from time to time, by different members of the establishment, and would declare that she was perfectly happy; but on such occasions her last words always bore the same burden, "Never, never, never, never!" One day while she was there, John Thomas came home, a little, perhaps, the worse for what he had taken, and made his way in among the pickle-jars and jam-pots. "Mary," he said, "the parshon 's married,—might ashwell come round, old girl, ansh marry me."

"John," she said, very gravely, "Anastasia Fitzapplejohn, no doubt, is fond of these jovial humors. Had you not better seek her society?" He answered with an oath, and expressed the wish that Miss Fitzapplejohn might be taken at once to a place he should not have named. "To-morrow you will wish the same for me," she said. That sobered him. He fell prostrate at her feet, and, grovelling in the dust, swore with many oaths that if she would only consent to be Mrs. Thomas he would take the pledge on the next morning. She bent down over him and gave him her cool, soft hand to raise him, and with her taper fingers pushed the dishevelled hair from off his forehead, and then she brushed his clothes. But as she did so she said continually, "Never, never, never, never!"

CHAPTER II.

LOVE FORGIVES.

When the Right Honorable Catharine Mount Energy, Countess of Pieponder, died, which she did the week after she had married Mr. Dribble, it was discovered that her affairs were very much out of order. By the singular but well-known laws of Kent, in which county the marriage had been celebrated, Mr. Dribble became responsible for the debts of his widow and all her relations. This was a crushing blow, and just at this time the bishop dismissed him as being lacking in spiritual grace. Mr. Dribble then bethought himself of the sweet passages of his earlier years, and, remembering that Mrs. Johnson had saved a little money, saw at once where lay his only chance of salvation here on earth. So he went to Finsbury Square, nothing abashed. "Do you love me, Mary?" he said.

The tell-tale blood rushed to her face, as she stood for half an hour gently shaking her head and gazing into his eyes. Then she said, with that sweet voice of hers, which was the life of all her lovers, "Love you, Mr. Dribble? Ay, that I do."

"And love forgives," he said, taking her sweet hand within his clammy grasp.

"Yes, love forgives."

"And you forgive."

"I have forgiven."

"Then you will consent to become Mrs. Dribble?"

Again she stood gazing into his eyes for half an hour; but when she made her answer, it was still the same, "Never, never, never, never!"

CHAPTER III.

SQUIRE ROBINSON.

About this time there came to town an old gentleman from the country, who had known Mary's father, and he brought with him his daughter Jemima. Jemima Robinson and Mary Tomkins were fast friends, though narrow circumstances compelled the latter to administer to the wants of her aunt's inmates. Now, it was thought that the presence of the old squire and his daughter might induce the heart-laden girl to take counsel with prudence, and to give herself either to the one suitor or to the other.

"My dear," said the squire, "you must think of the future."

"And of the past," said Mary.

"Let the past take care of itself, my dear. A house over your head and half a dozen children are great blessings. Johnny Thomas is a sprightly fellow. Thou hast half a mind to take him, I know, Mary."

"But not more than half, Mr. Robinson."

"Dang it, girl! then have the parson. He had ever a sheep's eye for thee, and, if I remember rightly, thou wast sweet upon him once."

"'T was but half sweet," she whispered, with her eyes turned to the ground.

"But thou knowest how the donkey fared who was starved to death between two bundles of hay. Thou wouldst not imitate the ass!"

"The poor brute at any rate was honest," said Mary.

"Thou robbest me almost of my patience," said the squire, angrily. "Thou canst not have both. Take one and leave the other."

But she answered him only as she had ever answered,—"Never, never, never, never!"

END OF VOLUME II.

AFTER HUGO.

Guard well this little one of earth:
To his vast soul our God is given;
For children are before their birth
Lights in the blue of Heaven.

God to our hold of thorny care
Sends children, His dear gifts, awhile.
Their pretty joys His teachings are,
His pardon is their smile.

Their heritage is only bliss,
Their tender radiance is our joy.
Ah! if they thirst, weeps Paradise;
Shudders, if chill, the sky.

Man holds an angel in his power:
Shall Heaven's standards all be furled,
When Innocence, in woe one hour,
Arraigns a guilty world?

When God shall come for feeble things
Whom, 'mid the shadows where we sleep,
He gave us from His sheltering wings,
And finds in rags they weep.

M.

SHEETS FOR THE CRADLE

"Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores."

VOL. I. — No. 5. BOSTON, DECEMBER 10, 1875. PRICE, 15 CENTS.

Sheets for the Cradle.

EDITOR - - MISS SUSAN HALE.

The series will consist of six numbers. Terms of subscription, *One Dollar* in advance, for which the papers will be sent by mail, post paid.

GOOD EVENING, ladies and gentlemen of the Fair, how is it going? Are you all in your places? Ah yes, I see everything on its pillar and every one at his post. Not a bad life this Fair life, don't you think?

We find it very agreeable at THE SHELVES. When business is lively, to be sure it is rather puzzling, — writing down the address of a subscriber with one hand and making change for a single number with the other, while giving raffle shares at the same moment to the lady who wants 49 in the red and gray table-cloth and to the gentleman who is wild to buy out THE SWAN. And, by the way, the next generation must do something about pencils. Can't somebody invent a pencil which will be everywhere all the time, or at least sometimes somewhere? Can't pencils be introduced into houses like the telegraph, and always on tap, as little messenger boys are nowadays?

Such active work tries the mettle of the staff at the Shelves. Then it is washing and ironing day for the sheets all at once; but when those rare moments of calm come, which must come even to this brilliant and attractive resort, when we settle down in our chairs and read our own newspaper, — the new edition, damp from the press, — the sensation of repose which pervades the Hall penetrates to the Shelves; and we welcome the appearance of that rainbow in the soul which is the consequence of duty perform d. The musicians are furtively touching their strings; the floor committee are moving about to be sure all is right; the managers of the tables are adjusting their displays, to make each article look its most tempting. It is the pause before the attack.

There comes the charge of the enemy, to demolish our barricades of embroidery, carving, painting, pottery. The resistance is but feeble behind the works. Let them come on!

THE babies in the Massachusetts Asylum are never frightened by their nurses.

It is to them merely a matter of literature that wicked nurses ever frighten babies.

Imagine the sensations of a two-year-old in the Asylum, who, having finished her oatmeal in the morning, takes up her Frithiof's Saga, and reads,

"Yes, 't is true I burned his temple,
True I 'm termed the Varg i Vehm.
At that name your old men tremble,
Women faint, and children scream."

When this baby shows this to the next baby, who is reading Rokeby, imagine their joint surprise as the second baby reads,—

"Panama's maids shall long turn pale,
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The froward child with Bertram's name."

And a third baby, with a pocket Shakespeare, might well surprise them with this: —

Countess of Auvergne.— "Is this the scourge of France?
Is this the Talbot so much feared abroad,
That with his name the mothers still their babes?"

And, —

Talbot —"Here, said they, is the terror of the French,
The scarecrow that affrights our children so."

AN ANECDOTE OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

IN the late summer of 1852 I went down to Bath to spend a day with the late Mr. Landor. After dinner he showed us his pictures, awful warnings, most of them, but on which he set a value in the inverse ratio of what any sane man would have offered for them. Among these, however, was the portrait of one of his ancestors in the Savage line, a cavalier, whom Landor knighted and made Speaker of the last Parliament of Charles I. I say that he performed these feats of sovereignty and election, because he was as much a poet in his pedigree as in other matters, adding a cubit to the stature of his hereditary claims of birth with as much good faith as want of authority. As we stood before the picture he asked me if I saw in it a likeness to any one else. With a little hesitation I answered that I thought it recalled Milton. "Right, quite right!" cried he in his strident tone. "Now tell me if you see any other likeness in it." To a man knowing even the rudiments of human nature this was a painfully leading question, and I trust I shall be forgiven at the last great day for saying, after a hypocritical pause of deliberation, "I think I find also a resemblance to Mr. Landor."—"Right again, quite right!" he shouted, triumphantly. "Well, I was one day showing that portrait to a friend, when he said, 'Why, Landor, how is it that you take pride in your descent from this old royalist,—you who would have cut off Charles's head with the worst of 'em?' 'Not at all,' said I, 'I would have done nothing of the kind.' 'You amaze me! You've altogether shifted your ground, then, since I saw you last?' 'Not I! I would not have allowed him the privilege of decollation. I'd have hanged him like any other malefactor!'" The last sentence was uttered *crescendo* and as a single word, rising to a scream of exultation at the end. Then followed that barking laugh so well described by Mr. Forster. I have never seen this in print, though I dare say the scene was enacted with many besides myself. It is so characteristic of Landor that it seems worth preserving.

NEVER, NEVER,—NEVER, NEVER.

A CONDENSED NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES, AFTER THE MANNER OF BRET HARTE.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW BISHOP.

JEMIMA ROBINSON was a sprightly girl, and if any one had dominion over Mary Tomkins it was she. "Marry come up, Molly!" she said, "how many men do you think are going to die for you? If I were Johnny Thomas I would take you by the neck and lug you into church."

"It would avail nothing, Jemima," said Mary Tomkins.

"I 'd stop that 'Never, never,' with a mouthful of kisses."

"That has availed nothing, Jemima," she said.

"What ar't feared on, girl?" she said. "Is not marriage honorable?"

"And so is single-blessedness."

"Single fiddlestick! I would it were my chance."

"And have you no lovers, Jemima?"

"Not a ghost of a swain! not a thread-paper of a man. Would that I had! Thank God, I could love any man that would ask me. But to lead apes in hell with two such strings to your bow! 'T is a sheer wasting of the gifts of Providence."

"I do love to lead apes," said Mary.

"Then lead one here and take the parson. You have not heard it, perhaps, but I know. The Queen will make him Bishop of Rochester next week. She saw his profile the other day in a shop-window, and swore that he was a sweet divine."

"And will Abraham really be a bishop?"

"'T is true."

"Cherubic with lawn sleeves, and seraphic with an apron!" Mary turned her eyes up to heaven as she spoke.

"Indeed he will. And you, — you would look the bishop's wife to a T."

Mary paused that day; she paused all that night; she paused the next morning, and then she made her reply, —

"Never, never, never, never!"

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

ON the next morning, John Thomas was gazetted postmaster-general. He had invented a new farthing postage-stamp, and it was felt that his claims could not be passed over. He expelled the novel and the bottle of brandy from his desk, and found that the exigencies of his new position required him to leave Finsbury Square. But though he was now Lord Thomas, he did not forget Mary Tomkins; for whether he were "my lord" or simply "Johnny Thomas," he carried a loyal heart in his bosom; and though he may have dallied with Anastasia Fitzapplejohn, such dallying had been but the efflorescence of his youth. So now he spoke out to the lady of his heart with a gravity becoming his lofty rank.

"Miss Tomkins," he said.

"My lord," she replied, standing before him with downcast eyes.

"Miss Tomkins, there have been some sweet words between you and me."

"Aye, my lord; and more than words."

"Some passages of what the world calls — love."

"Trifles, my lord; meaning nothing to one so high in the world's esteem as your lordship." Then were her eyes more downcast than ever, and her little fingers moved tremulously one over another.

"Miss Tomkins," he said, "lend me that hand." And she lent him her little hand. He, too, stood awhile, gazing, and then he spoke again. "Miss Tomkins," he said, "shall it be mine forever?"

But she answered him straightway, with more than her usual eagerness, "Never, never, never, never!"

CHAPTER III.

"TILL ANOTHER YOUNG MAN CAME."

THE Bishop of Rochester sat in his palace, and over against him sat Mrs. Dribble, his second wife. No more powerful lady ever assisted to carry a crozier.

Lord Thomas quaffed his ruby wines in a West-End mansion, and Lady Thomas, the daughter of a marquis, counted the corks.

But Mary Tomkins still made the gravies and eked out the butter in Finsbury Square. Did no soft regrets mar the quiescence of her life? Perhaps a few soft regrets did mar the quiescence of her life.

But her aunt observed that, during all her leisure hours, she applied herself with unaccustomed diligence to her needle. At last she brought forth from her closet a coarse and somewhat thick chamber-gown or morning wrapper. Its color was gray, and 't was made of serge; but up and down the collar and round the waist, and in and out of the plaits a curious device had been worked. The letters were not easy to decipher, but when they were read they ran as follows: —

"OLD MAID."

"And will you wear it?" asked her astonished aunt.

"Indeed I will," said Mary. "For ever and ever, for ever and ever."

And she wore it — till another young man came that way.

Finis.

NORA.

"Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman."
— *King Lear.*

SHE is not what the world calls fair;
Not hers the wealth of auburn hair
That clusters round a neck of snow,
Nor hers the raven ringlets' flow.

Her eye burns not with passion's hue, —
The flashing black, the brimming blue;
No roses deck her features wan,
Nor hers the graces of the swan.

But when she speaks her accents seem
Like the weird music of a dream,
So strange, so sweet, so sadly clear
The sounds which die upon my ear.

Sleeping or waking, oh, how oft
I hear that voice so low, so soft!
And while its music soothes my care
I half forget she is not fair.

And as I own its magic sway,
My charmèd spirit seems to say,
How full of love the soul must be
That breathes such gracious melody!

B.